THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

MMTC Projects in Orissa

424. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (MMTC) has made any plan to launch some projects in Orissa; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the estimated cost and the employment generation potentiality of those projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). MMTC is proposing to set up a one million tonne Steel Plant Project at Duburi in the State of Orissa with an estimated cost of Rs.1510 crores. The project will give direct employment to about 1750 people. MMTC is also planning to set up a Coke Oven Plant Project to produce 8.8 lakh tonnes of metallurgical coke and captive power plant of 55 MW capacity at an estimated cost of Rs.480 crores. This project will provide direct employment opportunity to about 350 people.

Shortage of Coal

425. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the failure of public sector coal companies to invest in new projects during the last three years has triggered an acute demand and supply crisis in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps the Government propose to take in this regard including urging the public sector units to invest more in coal projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b). Planning Commission has estimated raw coal demand of coal at 325.00 million tonnes during the year 1996-97. During this period domestic availability of coal is estimated at 290.65 million tonnes. Thus the gap between demand and availability of raw coal from domestic sources during the year 1996-97 would be 34.35 million tonnes.

The gap between demand and availability has increased partialy due to sudden jump in demand and partialy due to inability of coal companies to invest in new project due to resource constraints.

(c) To augment resources of public sector coal companies following measures have been taken :

(i) Partial de-regulation of coal prices is likely to improve internal resource generation of coal companies which will enable new projects to be taken up. It will also improve the financial viability of new mining projects.

(ii) The capital base of Coal India Limited has been restructured to enable it to raise additional financial resources from the capital markets which are required to add new coal production capacity.

To augment supply of coal following other measures have been taken.

(i) Increasing efficiency and productivity in existing mines by modernisation, application of new technologies and ensuring timely availability of inputs and infrastructural facilities.

(ii) Steps are being taken in co-ordination with the Railways to remove the transportation bottlenecks in such coalfield areas which have potential for enhanced production.

(iii) Steps are being taken to remove the bottlenecks in land acquisition.

(iv) Private sector companies engaged in production of iron and steel, cement and generation of power have been permitted to take up coal mining for captive consumption. This is expected to increase domestic coal production.

[Translation]

I.T. Evasion By Big Companies

426. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Income Tax Officers have detected some cases of Income Tax evasion by big companies of the country during the period between Ist July, 1996 to 10th November, 1996;

(b) whether the officers of Directorate of Enforcement have also conducted raids on some big companies for violation of FERA during the said period;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the alleged involvement of some Government officials in these cases has also been detected;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the details of the action taken so far against the defaulter companies and alleged guilty officers?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) Income Tax Department has detected instances of tax evasion in some such companies during the period between Ist July, 1996 to 10th November, 1996.